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Agenda item 3

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 23 March 2017

34/12. The right to food

The Human Rights Council,

Recalling all previous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council on the right to food, as well as all resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights on the issue,

Recalling also the seventh special session of the Human Rights Council, at which the Council analysed the negative impact of the worsening world food crisis on the realization of the right to food for all, and Council resolutions S-7/1 of 22 May 2008, 9/6 of 18 September 2008 and 12/10 of 1 October 2009,

Recalling further the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for her or his health and well-being, including food, the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in particular Millennium Development Goal 1 on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals on ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture and on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere,

Recalling the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in which the right of everyone to adequate food, including the fundamental right of every person to be free from hunger, is recognized,

Bearing in mind the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action, adopted at the World Food Summit in November 1996, the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, adopted on 13 June 2002, and the Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security, adopted on 16 November 2009,

Reaffirming the importance of the concrete recommendations contained in the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, adopted by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in November 2004, and the Rome

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Please recycle

Declaration on Nutrition and its Framework for Action, adopted in Rome on 21 November 2014,

Acknowledging that the right to food has been recognized as the right of every individual, alone or in community with others, to have physical and economic access at all times to sufficient, adequate and nutritious food, in conformity with, inter alia, the culture, beliefs, traditions, dietary habits and preferences of individuals, that is produced and consumed sustainably, thereby preserving access to food for future generations,

Reaffirming the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security contained in the Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security,

Reaffirming also that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and that they must be treated globally, in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis,

Reaffirming further that a peaceful, stable and enabling political, social and economic environment at both the national and international levels is the essential foundation that will enable States to give adequate priority to food security and poverty eradication,

Determined to take new steps forward in the commitment of the international community with a view to achieving substantial progress in the realization of the right to food by an increased and sustained effort of international cooperation and solidarity, with a view to building a community of shared future for humanity,

Reiterating, as in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, that food should not be used as an instrument of political or economic pressure, and reaffirming in this regard the importance of international cooperation and solidarity, and the necessity of refraining from unilateral measures that are not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations and that endanger food and nutrition security,

Convinced that each State must adopt a strategy consistent with its resources and capacities to achieve its individual goals in implementing the recommendations contained in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action and, at the same time, cooperate regionally and internationally in order to organize collective solutions to global issues of food security in a world of increasingly interlinked institutions, societies and economies, where coordinated efforts and shared responsibilities are essential,

Reaffirming that food security is a national responsibility, and that any plan for addressing food security challenges must be nationally articulated, designed, owned and led, and built on consultation with all key stakeholders, and recognizing the commitment to strengthening the multilateral system in the channelling of resources and in the promotion of policies dedicated to fighting hunger and malnutrition,

Recognizing that, despite the efforts made and the fact that some positive results have been achieved, the problems of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition have a global dimension and that there has not been sufficient progress in reducing hunger, and that they could increase dramatically in some regions unless urgent, determined and concerted action is taken,

Recognizing also the complex character of the global food crisis, in which the right to adequate food has been threatened to be violated on a substantial scale, as a combination of several major factors, such as the effects of the global financial and economic crisis, environmental degradation, desertification and the impact of global climate change, as well as natural disasters and the lack in many countries of the appropriate technology,

investment and capacity-building necessary to confront its impact, particularly in developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States, and the need for coherence and collaboration between international institutions at the global level,

Recognizing further the need to urgently assist some African countries that are facing drought, starvation and famine threats that could affect millions of people, most of whom are women and children, who risk losing their lives,

Recognizing that the elimination of the current distortions in the agricultural trading system will allow local producers and poor farmers to compete and to sell their products, thereby facilitating the realization of the right to adequate food, while noting the commitment to continuing the agricultural trade discussions as mandated by the World Trade Organization,

Resolved to act to ensure that the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights is taken into account at the national, regional and international levels in measures to address the realization of the right to food,

Recognizing the importance and positive role of smallholder and subsistence farmers, including women farmers, young farmers, family farmers and farmers in less favoured areas, cooperatives and indigenous and local communities in developing countries,

Expressing its deep concern at the number and scale of natural disasters, diseases and pest infestations, as well as the negative impact of climate change, and their increasing impact in recent years, which have, in combination with other factors, resulted in substantial loss of life and livelihood and threatened agricultural production and food and nutrition security, in particular in developing countries,

Recognizing the need to prioritize food security and to end hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food systems to the adverse impact of climate change, and, given this situation, that small and medium-sized farmers in developing countries need to receive technical, technology transfer and capacity-building support,

Stressing the need to increase official development assistance devoted to agriculture, both in real terms and as a share of total official development assistance,

Recognizing the need to increase sustainable private and public investments in agriculture from all relevant sources for the realization of the right to food,

Recalling the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security by the Committee on World Food Security at its thirty-eighth session, held on 11 May 2012, and by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its 144th session,

Recalling also the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, which were endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security at its forty-first session, held in October 2014,

Stressing the importance of the second International Conference on Nutrition, hosted by the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome from 19 to 21 November 2014, at which the two main outcome documents, namely, the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action, were endorsed,

Bearing in mind that excessive and unregulated exposure to pesticides can have a severe impact on the enjoyment of human rights, in particular the right to food, as well as the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,

Recalling the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management, adopted by the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its thirty-eighth session, in June 2013,

Recognizing the importance of the protection and preservation of agrobiodiversity in guaranteeing food security and the right to food for all,

Recognizing also the role of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as the key United Nations agency for rural and agricultural development and its work in supporting the efforts of Member States to achieve the full realization of the right to food, including through its provision of technical assistance to developing countries in support of the implementation of national priority frameworks,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/288 on 27 July 2012, and reaffirming the principles contained therein,

1. *Reaffirms* that hunger constitutes an outrage and a violation of human dignity, and therefore requires the adoption of urgent measures at the national, regional and international levels for its elimination;

2. *Also reaffirms* the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, so as to be able to fully develop and maintain his or her physical and mental capacities;

3. *Considers it intolerable* that, as estimated by the United Nations Children's Fund, more than one third of the children who die every year before the age of 5 die from hunger-related illness and that, as estimated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, about 795 million people in the world remain undernourished owing to the lack of sufficient food for conducting an active and healthy life, including as one of the effects derived from the global food crisis, while, according to the Organization, the planet could produce enough food to feed everyone around the world;

4. *Expresses its deep concern* that, according to the report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations entitled *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015*, the number of hungry people in the world remains unacceptably high and the vast majority of hungry people live in developing countries;

5. *Expresses its concern* at the fact that the effects of the world food crisis continue to have serious consequences for the poorest and most vulnerable people, particularly in developing countries, which have been further aggravated by the world financial and economic crisis, and at the particular effects of this crisis on many net food-importing developing countries, especially least developed countries;

6. *Expresses its great concern* that, while women contribute more than 50 per cent of the food produced worldwide, they also account for 70 per cent of the world's hungry, that women and girls are disproportionately affected by hunger, food insecurity and poverty, in part as a result of gender inequality and discrimination, that in many countries girls are twice as likely as boys to die from malnutrition and preventable childhood diseases, and that it is estimated that almost twice as many women as men suffer from malnutrition;

7. *Recognizes* that reinforcing the rights of girls and women, especially those who are poor and vulnerable, to education and social protection and that increasing women's participation in decision-making and access to resources in an objective manner are critical for enhancing women's vital role in advancing agricultural development and food security, and recognizes also in that regard that the promotion of agro-industry

through the voluntary dissemination of knowledge, the development and transfer of technology, capacity-building and financial support is a precondition for the involvement of women in advancing agriculture in developing countries;

8. *Encourages* all States to mainstream a gender perspective in food security programmes and to take action to address de jure and de facto gender inequality and discrimination against women, in particular where such inequality and discrimination contribute to the malnutrition of women and girls, including by taking measures to ensure the full and equal realization of the right to food and ensuring that women and girls have equal access to social protection and resources, including income, land and water, and their ownership, and full and equal access to health care, education, science and technology, to enable them to feed themselves and their families, and in this regard stresses the need to empower women and to strengthen their role in decision-making;

9. *Recognizes* the importance of smallholder and subsistence farmers and peasants in developing countries, including women and local and indigenous communities, in ensuring food security, reducing poverty and preserving ecosystems, and the need to assist their development;

10. *Encourages* the Special Rapporteur on the right to food to continue to mainstream a gender perspective in the fulfilment of her mandate, and encourages the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and all other United Nations bodies and mechanisms that address the right to food and food insecurity to integrate and effectively implement a gender perspective in their relevant policies, programmes and activities regarding access to food;

11. *Reaffirms* the need to ensure that programmes delivering safe, sufficient, nutritious and culturally accepted food are inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities;

12. *Encourages* States to take steps with a view to progressively achieving the full realization of the right to food for all, and to take steps to promote the conditions for everyone to be free from hunger and, as soon as possible, to enjoy fully the right to food and, where appropriate, to consider establishing appropriate institutional mechanisms and to adopt national plans to combat hunger;

13. *Recognizes* the advances made through South-South cooperation in developing countries and regions in connection with food security and the development of agricultural production for the full realization of the right to food, and encourages States to increase such cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation and to promote triangular cooperation further;

14. *Also recognizes* the importance of traditional sustainable agricultural practices, inter alia, traditional seed supply systems, including for many indigenous peoples and local communities;

15. *Stresses* that the primary responsibility of States is to promote and protect the right to food, and that the international community should provide, through a coordinated response and upon request, international cooperation in support of national and regional efforts by providing the assistance necessary to increase food production and access to food, particularly through agricultural development assistance, the transfer of technology, food crop rehabilitation assistance and food aid, achieving food security, with special attention to the specific needs of women and girls, support for the development of adapted technologies, research on rural advisory services and support for access to financing services, and to ensure support for the establishment of secure land tenure systems;

16. *Calls upon* States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to fulfil their obligations under articles 2 (1) and 11 (2), in particular with regard to the right to adequate food;

17. *Calls upon* States, individually and through international cooperation and assistance, relevant multilateral institutions and other relevant stakeholders, to take all the measures necessary to ensure the realization of the right to food as an essential human rights objective, and to consider reviewing any policy or measure that could have a negative impact on the realization of the right to food, particularly the right of everyone to be free from hunger, before instituting such a policy or measure;

18. *Recognizes* that 70 per cent of hungry people live in rural areas and 50 per cent are small-scale farm-holders, and that these people are especially vulnerable to food insecurity, given the increasing cost of inputs and the fall in farm incomes; that access to land, water, seeds and other natural resources is an increasing challenge for poor producers; that sustainable and gender-sensitive agricultural policies are important tools for promoting land and agrarian reform, rural credit and insurance, technical assistance and other associated measures to achieve food security and rural development; and that support by States for small farmers, fishing communities and local enterprises, including through the facilitation of access of their products to national and international markets and empowerment of small producers, particularly women, in value chains, is a key element for food security and the right to food;

19. *Stresses* the importance of fighting hunger in rural areas, including through national efforts supported by international partnerships to stop desertification and land degradation and through investments and public policies that are specifically appropriate to the risk of drylands, and in this regard calls for the full implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

20. *Recalls* the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and acknowledges that many indigenous organizations and representatives of indigenous peoples have expressed in different forums their deep concern over the obstacles and challenges to the full enjoyment of the right to food that indigenous peoples face, and calls upon States to take new actions to combat the root causes of the often disproportionately high level of hunger and malnutrition among indigenous peoples and the continuous discrimination against them;

21. *Welcomes* the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples,[1] held on 22 and 23 September 2014, and the commitment to developing, in conjunction with the indigenous peoples concerned and where appropriate, policies, programmes and resources to support indigenous peoples' occupations, traditional subsistence activities, economies, livelihoods, food security and nutrition;

22. *Requests* all States, private actors, international organizations and agencies, within their respective mandates, to take fully into account the need to promote the effective realization of the right to food for all, including in ongoing negotiations in different fields;

23. *Encourages* all relevant international organizations and agencies to bring a human rights perspective and the need for the realization of the right to food for all to their studies, research, reports and resolutions on the issue of food security;

[1] General Assembly resolution 69/2.

24. *Recognizes* the need to strengthen national commitments and international assistance, upon the request of and in cooperation with affected countries, towards the full realization and protection of the right to food, and in particular to develop national protection mechanisms for people forced to leave their homes and land because of hunger or humanitarian emergencies affecting the enjoyment of the right to food;

25. *Notes with appreciation* the growing movement, in different regions of the world, towards the adoption of framework laws, national strategies and measures in support of the full realization of the right to food for all;

26. *Recognizes* the importance of giving due consideration to the adverse impact of climate change on the full realization of the right to food;

27. *Stresses* the need to make efforts to mobilize and optimize the allocation and utilization of technical and financial resources from all sources, including external debt relief for developing countries, and to reinforce national actions to implement sustainable food security policies;

28. *Calls for* a successful, development-oriented outcome of the trade negotiations of the World Trade Organization, in particular on the remaining issues of the Doha Development Round, as a contribution to the creation of international conditions permitting the full realization of the right to food;

29. *Stresses* that all States should make every effort to ensure that their international policies of a political and economic nature, including international trade agreements, do not have a negative impact on the right to food in other countries;

30. *Encourages* the Special Rapporteur to continue to cooperate with States in order to enhance the contribution of development cooperation and food aid to the realization of the right to food, within existing mechanisms, taking into account the views of all stakeholders;

31. *Recalls* the importance of the New York Declaration on Action against Hunger and Poverty, and recommends the continuation of efforts aimed at identifying additional sources of financing for the fight against hunger and poverty;

32. *Recognizes* that the promises made at the World Food Summit in 1996 to halve the number of persons who are undernourished are not being fulfilled, while recognizing the efforts of Member States in this regard, and once again invites all international financial and development institutions, and the relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, to give priority to and provide the funding necessary to realize the right to food, as set out in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, and to achieve the aims of Sustainable Development Goal 2 and other food and nutrition-related targets;

33. *Reaffirms* that integrating food and nutritional support with the goal of ensuring that all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life is part of a comprehensive effort to improve public health, including the response to the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases;

34. *Urges* States to give adequate priority in their development strategies and expenditures to the realization of the right to food;

35. *Stresses* the importance of international cooperation and development assistance as an effective contribution to both the expansion and improvement of agriculture and its environmental sustainability, and the provision of humanitarian food assistance in activities relating to emergency situations for the realization of the right to food and the achievement of sustainable food security, while recognizing that each State

has the primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of national programmes and strategies in this regard;

36. *Calls upon* States to heed the urgent United Nations humanitarian appeal to assist countries facing drought, starvation and famine with emergency aid and urgent funding, and underlines that if no immediate response is received, an estimated 20 million people, most of whom are women and children, risk losing their lives;

37. *Invites* all relevant international organizations, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to continue to promote policies and projects that have a positive impact on the right to food, to ensure that partners respect the right to food in the implementation of common projects, to support strategies of Member States aimed at the fulfilment of the right to food and to avoid any actions that could have a negative impact on its realization;

38. *Calls upon* the private sector, including transnational corporations, to support investment and innovation, recognizing women's economic empowerment, to help to, inter alia, increase the participation of small-scale farmers in markets and agriculture food chains;

39. *Encourages* the Special Rapporteur to continue her collaboration with relevant international organizations and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, in particular the Rome-based ones, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme, in order to contribute to ensuring that the right to food is promoted further within these organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates, including for the advancement of smallholders and agricultural workers in both developing and least developed countries;

40. *Underlines* the importance of effective remedies for violations of the right to food;

41. *Invites* States to promote practices that minimize potential health and environmental risks associated with pesticides, while ensuring their effective use;

42. *Encourages* farmers to adopt agricultural production practices that enhance biodiversity and soil fertility, and to adopt measures such as crop rotation, cover crops, low till, integrated pest management and crop selection appropriate for local conditions;

43. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Special Rapporteur;[2]

44. *Supports* the fulfilment of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, as established by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 6/2 of 27 September 2007;

45. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur, as part of the mandate, to continue to monitor the evolution of the world food crisis and, in the context of the mandate and regular reports, to keep the Human Rights Council informed of the impact of the crisis on the enjoyment of the right to food and to alert it to possible further actions in this regard;

46. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide all the human and financial resources necessary for the continuation of the effective fulfilment of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur;

47. *Calls upon* all Governments to cooperate with and assist the Special Rapporteur in her task by supplying all necessary information requested by the mandate holder, and to give serious consideration to responding favourably to the requests of the

[2] A/HRC/34/48.

Special Rapporteur to visit their countries to enable her to fulfil her mandate more effectively;

48. *Invites* Governments, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, treaty bodies, civil society actors, including non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur in the fulfilment of her mandate through, inter alia, the submission of comments and suggestions on ways and means of realizing the right to food;

49. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-seventh session;

50. *Decides* to continue consideration of this matter under the same agenda item at its thirty-seventh session.

56th meeting
23 March 2017

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 45 to 1, with 1 abstention. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Albania, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Mongolia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, South Africa, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

Republic of Korea]